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TWO GREEKS FACE WIRETAP CHARGES

Executives of a Major Athens
Paper Await Trial in Affair
Involving Book Author

Special to The New York Times

ATHENS, Oct. 3 — The publisher and the editor of Ethnos, the newspaper with Greece's largest circulation, will be tried in December on charges of tapping the office telephone of a Cypriot-born journalist in Athens and of publishing a transcript, lawyers in the case said today.

The journalist, Paul Anastasiades, who writes under the name Paul Anastasi, is a correspondent for The Daily Telegraph of London and a part-time correspondent for The New York Times.

The case was brought by the Athens Public Prosecutor, the Greek equivalent of a district attorney, and Mr. Anastasiades is involved as the offended party. If convicted, the Ethnos publisher, George Bobolas, and the editor, Alexander Filipopoulos, could be sentenced to a maximum of five years' imprisonment. In the investigation preceding the placing of formal charges, both men acknowledged the use of material obtained by tapping but said they were not directly involved in the tapping itself.

Lawyers for Mr. Anastasiades, in making their announcement today, did not say when the two men had been charged or when the court date had been set, but both actions were believed to have been taken in the last several days.

The disclosure of a taped conversation between Mr. Anastasiades and a lawyer friend followed the correspondent's publication of a book in which he contended that Ethnos received the material support and assistance of the Soviet secret police, the K.G.B. In a suit for libel and defamation brought by Ethnos, Mr. Anastasiades was first sentenced to two years in prison; on appeal, the term was commuted to a fine last May.

Tapes Offered to Press Ministry

In presenting his charges against Mr. Bobolas and Mr. Filipopoulos for trial on Dec. 13, the Prosecutor, Leonidas Lazarakos, accused the two men of initiating the wiretap and making illicit use of the information obtained by publishing it and by offering the tapes to the head of the Press Ministry, Under Secretary Dimitris Maroudas.

Mr. Maroudas said the Government had refused to accept the tapes. In recent conversations, a senior official assured The Times that no wire-tapping of its phone conversations was being conducted. The New York Times, which has its own correspondent based in Athens, rents office space from Mr. Anastasiades in the same suite in which he has his office.

Zisis Constantinou, one of Mr. Anastasiades's lawyers, said today that the trial would be the first in Greece on wiretapping charges.

The conversation that Ethnos published involved Mr. Anastasiades and Panayotis Zotos. Speaking shortly after Mr. Bobolas had filed suit against Mr. Anastasiades, the two discussed the Anastasiades book and Soviet "disinformation" tactics. In an article accompanying the extracts, Ethnos presented the conversation as one between two agents of the Central Intelligence Agency.

The newspaper asserted that the "agents," Mr. Anastasiades and Mr. Zotos, discussed plans to murder Ethnos personnel, destabilize democratic institutions in Greece and extend such activities to other European countries. Nothing in the published excerpts supported these accusations.

Ethnos said in its article that it possessed "tens of tapes" of Mr. Anastasiades's conversations. It said they had been mailed anonymously to the newspaper by people it described as members of Mr. Anastasiades's "group of agents who apparently disagreed with the murderous plans of their bosses and decided to warn us against the intentions of this ruthless group."

Anonymous Caller Cited

Testifying before a magistrate investigating the case against them, the publisher and the editor said they had not been involved in the wiretapping. They said their only contact with the tappers was an anonymous telephone call advising them of the particular interest of the tape that Ethnos subsequently published.

Mr. Bobolas and Mr. Filipopoulos said they had considered it their duty to inform the public of the purported conspiracy against Ethnos.

The prosecutor accused them of initiating the tapping when they failed to produce the parcel in which they said the tapes had been mailed. He accused Mr. Bobolas and Mr. Filipopoulos of violating, "jointly and with intent," a constitutional guarantee of privacy of communications.

Mr. Filipopoulos and Mr. Bobolas declined to comment on the accusations.

Meanwhile, Mr. Anastasiades is appealing to the Supreme Court for a new trial in the libel case. In his earlier appeal, the public prosecutor said that Ethnos was "evidently pro-Soviet" and that some of the Soviet publishing officials with whom Mr. Bobolas had dealings as a publisher of Soviet books in Greek translation might have been K.G.B. agents. But he said this did not justify the contentions of Mr. Anastasiades's book.